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CAPTURE OF EIGHT COUNTERREVOLUTIONARIES
BY GUERRILLA ARMED FORCES

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OFFICIAL REPLY TO U.S. NOTE OF PROTEST

Havana PRENSA LATINA to Latin America 0125 GMT 26 February 1963--E (OFFICIAL USE ONLY)

(Text) Havana--The Revolutionary Government of Cuba on 26 February answered a U.S. State Department note on the alleged attack by Cuban planes on a U.S. fishing vessel. The text of the Cuban note, sent by way of Miroslav Ruzok, the ambassador of the Socialist Republic of Czechoslovakia in Washington, says:

The Revolutionary Government of Cuba rejects categorically in all parts the note of protest presented by the U.S. Government over the fabricated attack in international waters of two Cuban reconnaissance planes on a U.S. fishing vessel. The false and tendentious version of the facts presented in the note only pretend to hide and to justify, although in vain, a policy of force and, above all, the uninterrupted series of piratical acts which the Pentagon and the Central Intelligence Agency have been committing against the self-determination, the sovereignty, and the independence of the Cuban people, with complete disregard of the most elementary principles of international law and the United Nations.

The version which corresponds strictly with the facts is the following: On the afternoon of 20 February 1963, two reconnaissance planes of the Cuban Air Force which were carrying out a search flight in the area north of our coasts with the motive of finding two Cuban sigma-type vessels belonging to the Cardenas Fishing Cooperative--vessels which had been attacked and hijacked on 13 February in the area of Cayo Roque by a piratical band in the service of the Central Intelligence Agency--sighted a small fishing vessel which had no flags and which looked like a sigma type. The planes dropped down to try to identify it, but did not fire anything over the vessel or perform any hostile act. On finding that it was not the Cuban vessel they were looking for, the two airplanes immediately withdrew from the area and continued their search. The version that these planes withdrew because of the appearance of six U.S. Navy planes in the area is an apocryphal ingredient of the episode, deliberately devised by the State Department.

It is not difficult to understand, on the other hand, how incidents of this kind can take place under the illegal conditions created by the U.S. Government. The U.S. Government itself has found it necessary to declare that the vessel in question had no flag.

From the aforementioned facts come irrefutable conclusions: First, the reconnaissance planes of the Cuban Air Force carried out a search flight; second, their only purpose is descending over the U.S. fishing vessel, which had no flag and which looked like a sigma-type vessel, was to attempt to identify it; third, on ascertaining that this was not the vessel they were trying to locate, both planes climbed and withdrew. It is absolutely false, therefore, that the reconnaissance operation undertaken involved a violation of international laws. The law which assisted and assists Cuban planes in carrying out search flights over international waters, with the intention of locating hijacked vessels captured by piratical bands in the service of a foreign power, is inherent in the full exercise of sovereignty, and in no way can transgress international laws, which expressly condemn and sanction piratical acts.

The Revolutionary Government of Cuba does not have to give explanations of any kind about the means it adopts for its defense against aggressive and piratical acts of the government which is demanding them. And, furthermore, the Cuban fishing vessels for which the two search planes in question were looking, were recovered by the Revolutionary Navy which, in this operation captured components of a piratical band which came from Cayo Elbow, a British possession, where the mentioned ships had been taken and where the CIA had deposited arms which the pirates intended to bring into Cuba.

The captured pirates admitted being agents of the CIA, and three confessed their participation in the attack, assault, and hijacking of the two Cuban fishing vessels, stating that the armed boat they used departed from Florida. They also said that a third hijacked fishing boat had sunk after being dashed onto rocks of Cayo Elbow by the waves. They alleged, on being questioned, that the object of such hijacking was to use the Cuban fishermen in expediting illegal incursions in Cuba of infiltrated CIA arms and agents.

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They said that their specific task was to organize a band of counterrevolutionaries north of the province of Las Villas. They also disclosed that other piratical bands organized by the CIA have their hideouts in Puerto Rico, Venezuela, and Costa Rica, and a very active base in Cayo Estocairan, located in Florida. They added that the groups which operate from Santurce, Puerto Rico, have two high-speed vessels, armed with recoilless rifles of U.S. make.

The statements of the captured individuals, the documents which were taken from them and the U.S. arms which they intended to bring in, corroborate once again the direct responsibility of the U.S. Government in these acts of international piracy. A complete account of the aforementioned acts, as well as that of the violations of the Cuban air and sea space before, during, and after the illegal military blockade which placed the world on the threshold of thermonuclear war, would fill a large book.

It is sufficient, nevertheless, with the object of unequivocally placing the responsibility, to state the following facts in this note:

May 12, 1962: An armed piratical band, based on U.S. territory and belonging to the counter-revolutionary organization Alpha 66, attacked a patrol boat of the Revolutionary Navy, with the action resulting in the death of three and the wounding of three others of the Cuban vessel's crew.

August 24, 1962: Two armed pirate ships, proceeding from U.S. territory and belonging to the aforementioned counterrevolutionary organization, attacked the Hotel Sierra Maestra on the coast of the Miramar district, in the city of Havana, shelling and machinegunning various parts of the building and placing in danger the lives of the families in the hotel as well as in other houses in the area.

September 18, 1962: A pirate launch, belonging to the same organization and coming from U.S. territory, attacked two Cuban boats in front of the port of Caibarien, in the province of Las Villas, as well as the British merchant ship, New Land, which were loading sugar.

October 8, 1962: A pirate launch, proceeding from U.S. territory, fired on the coast of the port of Isabela de Sagua.

December 4, 1962: Two pirate launches, proceeding from U.S. territory, attacked the Juan Francisco beach, 30 kilometers from the port of Caibarien, in the province of Las Villas.

October 13, 1962: A pirate launch, proceeding from U.S. territory, attacked a Cuba recreation vessel in front of Cayo Blanco at the mouth of the Bay of Cardenas, kidnaping militamen Filiberto Suarez Lima and Miguel Cao Medina. Two other crewmen of the Cuban vessel had to swim to shore. The kidnaped militamen were taken to Miami, Florida, U.S.A., by the pirates.

February 9, 1963: Two U.S. military jet planes, F-101's with the insignia of the U.S. Air Force, discharged a hail of machinegun fire over Cayo Frances, a sugar dock located 25 kilometers northwest of the port of Caibarien in the province of Las Villas. At the time of this criminal aggression, about 100 Cuban workers and a number of Soviet technicians were digging wells to find petroleum. The pirate planes fled northward, the aggression being repelled by the Revolutionary Navy personnel stationed at Cayo Frances.

February 13, 1963: Two sigma-type vessels belonging to the fishing cooperative of Cardenas were attacked and hijacked by an armed launch and two brothers, Armando and Ramon Lopez Ruiz, were injured. The vessels were recovered by the Revolutionary Navy while its crewmembers were attempting to bring in a shipment of U.S. arms. Three members of the captured launch admitted their participation in this misdeed.

These acts clearly show that it is the U.S. Government and not the Cuban Government which violates international law, attacking directly or by means of its agents the territory of another state; that it is the U.S. Government and not the Cuban Government which organizes piratical outings in order to hijack the vessels of another state with the ultimate objective of using them to infiltrate CIA arms and agents; that it is the U.S. Government and not the Cuban Government which violates the air space and the seas of another state with complete disregard for international law and the charter of the United Nations; that it is the U.S. Government and not the

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Cuban Government which must give an immediate and precise explanation for its violations of Cuban self-determination, territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence; and that it is, in short, the Cuban Government which strongly protests against the policy of strength of the U.S. Government and expresses its irrevocable determination to adopt the means which it deems necessary for the defense of the nation.

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congressmen who were howling louder all the time in demand for an invasion of Cuba. On some occasions U.S. leaders gave the impression of being more concerned with Cuban affairs than with their own. All these repeated and warlike statements made the situation difficult. The U.S. leaders, who sometimes think with their heads and at other time with their feet, thought that Cuba was alone. Their statements and slanders were paving the way for a new aggression.